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TAGS: PREL PHUM UNSC SO SU

SUBJECT: AMB. RICE MEETS AU PERM REP

Classified By: Amb. Susan Rice, for reasons 1.4 b/d.

¶1. (C) In an April 9 courtesy call, Amb. Rice discussed a range of security and political issues with Amb. Lila Ratsifandrihamanana, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the UN. Amb. Rice advised against the planned May visit of a high-level AU delegation to Washington and New York to discuss the International Criminal Court's recent issuance of an arrest warrant for Sudanese President Bashir. Rice said that the visit was unneeded as the AU's position on the issue was already clear, and that for AU officials to press for an Article 16 deferral in the wake of Bashir's move to expel aid organizations would only hurt the AU's credibility. Ratsifandrihamanana thanked Rice for her candor and agreed to pass the message back to Addis Ababa.

¶2. (C) Ratsifandrihamanana, a former Malagasy foreign minister, solicited Amb. Rice's help in pressing for a quick return to constitutional rule in Madagascar. Rice assured her that the United States and African Union saw eye-to-eye on the issue, and asked the AU PermRep to lobby Libya to support a draft PRST to condemn the recent series of coups in Africa.

¶3. (C) The two ambassadors also discussed Amb. Rice's April 23 meeting with PermReps from the Africa Group. Rice stressed that she would prefer to have an interactive discussion among equals rather than a speech or Q&A session. Topics proposed for discussion included Darfur, Somalia, coups in Africa, human rights and development.

Rice